

**STRATEGY
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ENGAGEMENT FOR SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

BY

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ABSTRACT

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The author argues that sub-Saharan Africa is important to the United States. Southern Africa, by virtue of its mineral resources, geography, and state of economic development is poised to become an important strategic regional partner with the United States. South Africa, as the most developed nation in southern Africa, is the logical starting point for regional engagement by the United States. The author examines the use of two established initiatives, the Binational Commission and the African Crisis Response Initiative, as vehicles for engagement with South Africa. He shows how military forces are particularly well suited for regional engagement with South Africa and fit into the U.S. European Command's strategy for the region. He develops the viewpoint that as national military resources continue to lessen, a more focused approach will be necessary in the use and application of U.S. military forces to accomplish a portion of the presence goals of any military strategy of the next century. Finally, the author develops a framework with which to base a concentrated application of education, training, equipment, visits, and exercises to achieve portions of the European

Command's short and long term overseas presence goals which benefit the regional security of both southern Africa and the United States.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

It is hard to make the case that Africa, and in specific sub-Saharan Africa, is in any way important to the security of the United States. The White House document, National Security Strategy for a New Century barely acknowledges southern Africa and the mere mention of the region to most national security planners usually solicits a response that equates to, "we have no national interests in sub-Saharan Africa." So why, in an era of declining military budgets and increased commitment of U.S. forces around the world, should America consider regional military engagement with African nations?

To put it succinctly, we simply can no longer afford not to engage this troubled region. The long term costs of the U.S. isolation of Africa, unpreparedness, and inaction are measured in terms of increased U.S. military expenditures, haphazard diplomatic relationships, and large loss of life. It is more prudent, easier, and in the long run cheaper, for the United States to actively engage Africa on our terms. Doing it now enables the American security structure sufficient time to build relationships and promote regional cooperation before we find ourselves in a military, diplomatic, or humanitarian quagmire.

AMERICAN INTERESTS

Indeed, it is easy to overlook the fact that there are significant American interests in Africa. Some of these include:

- regional stability throughout Africa,
- access to the African infrastructure and the sea lines of communication,
- information and warning about African trends, personalities, events and issues,
- safety of American citizens in the region,
- a region free of weapons of mass destruction,
- a region free of sponsors or havens for transnational threats,
- cooperation in economic, humanitarian, and military efforts,
- freedom from egregious suffering,
- humane, managerially competent and accountable governance,
- sustained economic development and,
- an unthreatened natural environment.¹

This list is not too different from what the United States may want from any region of the world. The main difference between sub-Saharan Africa and other less developed regions is that Africans have few effective security organizations that can adequately address problems on a large scale. One of the rare areas in Africa with a sophisticated political, economic and military baseline with which to begin effective engagement is southern Africa. If the United States were to engage sub-Saharan Africa on a meaningful level, the logical place to start would be in a stable area with a developed infrastructure. That place is southern Africa.

In order to evaluate the strategic importance of southern Africa, it is necessary to consider the individual national capabilities of the region with special emphasis on South Africa. The southern African region includes the states of Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The sources of national capability that contribute to the southern African region's strategic importance include the wealth of mineral deposits, its intrinsic geographic location, and the industrial and economic capability of the region. Some of these factors are significant in a regional context, while others are significant in a global context.

MINERAL RESERVES

In the southern African region, the largest reserves of strategic minerals are found in South Africa, Angola, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Angola is one of the largest oil producers in Africa and also has iron ore deposits, as well as, large diamond reserves. Zimbabwe has estimated chrome ore reserves of 3 billion tons, and with South Africa, has about 95 percent of the world's reserves of chromium.² Nickel, copper, coal, and lithium deposits are also present. Zambia has large copper reserves, as well as, cobalt reserves and coal deposits, while Botswana has substantial diamond reserves. In the case of Namibia, there are

diamond and uranium reserves. Most of the countries in southern Africa are capable of producing a larger share of the world's mineral requirements. As far as minerals are concerned, the entire southern African region is of undeniable strategic importance to the United States.

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

South Africa is geo-strategically located in the dominant position in sub-Saharan Africa. The importance of the Cape sea route is demonstrated by the fact that 60 percent of Western Europe's oil requirements are transported along it. In the case of the United States, it is nearly 10 percent and in the case of Japan, it amounts to 20 percent. Also, 25 percent of Europe's food supplies are carried via this route. The closing of the Suez Canal, as Libya did by mining in 1984, resulted in a yearly average of more than 12,000 ships calling at South African ports, and nearly 14,000 ships sailing around the Cape. Although the Cape sea route from U.S. ports to the Arabian Gulf is longer than the Suez route, the military importance of this sea line of communication is significant. Even with Suez open, approximately 2,500 vessels per month sail around the Cape of which an estimated 1,000 are oil tankers.³ Almost as important, this commerce is protected throughout its transit of the region. Naval power in southern Africa, while small, is more than

adequate to provide security for merchant vessels as they transit the Cape. Angola and Mozambique have become increasingly important to the southern African region as an additional outlet to the sea for other regional mineral producers such as Zimbabwe and Botswana.

INDUSTRIAL AND ECONOMIC CAPABILITY

The fact that South Africa has a developed industrial infrastructure and is a net exporter of food is significant in a regional context. South Africa for instance, supplies 80 percent of Botswana's essential imports⁴ and has been a predominant trading partner with Zimbabwe since 1980. South Africa is the largest supplier of corn to Namibia and is Mozambique's largest single supplier of all trade goods. Since the fall of apartheid in 1994 and the removal of major trade restrictions, South Africa conducts commerce with over 47 African countries. In addition to the importance of South African exports to other states throughout the continent, there are important transportation links between South Africa and nations in the southern African region. South Africa's highly developed communications network positions it as a continental leader at the dawn of the information age. It seems poised to render security and humanitarian aid to other less developed southern African nations. A partnership with the Republic of

South Africa (RSA), therefore, seems a logical starting point for the United States to begin engagement to promote security in Africa.

SOUTH AFRICA AS A FIRST STEP TOWARD REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT

According to the Republic of South Africa's Defense in a Democracy: A White Paper on National Defence for the Republic of South Africa, the "ending of apartheid and the establishment of democracy have given rise to dramatic changes in the external strategic environment from the perspective of South Africa."⁵ South Africa is no longer isolated internationally and now participates in both international organizations embodied in the United Nations, and regional African economic and security structures such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The White Paper further describes the future role of South Africa which includes an active role in each of these forums with regard to peace and security in Africa and in southern Africa in particular. There are expectations that South Africa will become involved in multinational peace support operations on the continent.⁶

THE RSA/US BINATIONAL COMMISSION

Recognizing the importance of engaging the post-apartheid Republic of South Africa, the United States began a series of bilateral relationships under the title of Binational Commission or BNC. Founded during President Mandela's state visit to

Washington in 1994, the BNC was inaugurated in March of 1995.

The Binational Commission was designed to:

- promote the bilateral relationship between the United States and South Africa through a working partnership at the highest levels of government;
- launch a new era in cooperation between the two countries by establishing permanent and vigorous institutional partnerships;
- identify U.S. expertise which can assist South Africa in meeting its Reconstruction and Development Program goals and to explore areas for cooperation based upon shared values and experiences;
- build upon and expand the involvement of both private investors and non-government organizations in strengthening U.S./South African ties.⁷

The South African - U.S. Binational Commission is an initial effort toward forming a bilateral partnership through committees in seven areas of mutual interest to both nations: agriculture, conservation, environment and water, defense, human resources development and education, science and technology, sustainable energy, and trade and investment.

U.S. and South African senior government officials jointly chair the seven working BNC committees. According to a press release from the Office of the Vice President, "each committee works to identify and achieve clear, and mutually beneficial objectives, and promotes strong partnerships with private companies and non-governmental organizations in committee activities."⁸ While working committees schedule their own

meetings and projects throughout the year, the full BNC gathers in plenary session every six months to report to the Vice President of the United States, and Deputy South African President Thabo Mbeki. These reports detail the progress of specific projects and describe further areas for discussion and cooperation. The plenary meetings alternate between Washington and Pretoria.

Of particular interest to forming and promoting regional security interests of the United States is the Defense Committee. This committee is the newest of the seven primary BNC committees. Formed recently in July of 1997, the primary purpose of the Defense Committee is to coordinate and manage the conduct of U.S.-South Africa defense and security relations in accordance with each country's national policy goals. Semi-annual meetings of the Defense Committee are designed to facilitate regular communication and consultation between senior defense officials from both countries concerned with defense and security policy. In future meetings, it is envisioned that the Defense Committee will address a broad range of defense and operational issues of mutual interest, including defense cooperation, transformation of the South African defense establishment, lessons learned in peacekeeping operations, combined exercises, civil-military relations and environmental security. Therefore, any U.S. regional engagement plan that

uses the Defense Committee as a sponsor will likely have a greater chance of success for military forces of both nations.

In advance of the formation of the BNC Defense Committee, the United States, through the National Security Strategy of May 1997, promotes the use of the BNC as a vehicle for regional cooperation in sub-Saharan Africa. In developing integrated regional approaches, the Strategy states it is a primary goal for the United States, "...to help South Africa achieve its economic, political and democratic goals by continuing to provide substantial bilateral assistance, providing support through the Binational Commission and by aggressively promoting U.S. trade with and investment in South Africa."⁹ Clearly, the governments of the United States and South Africa view the BNC as the correct framework for any U.S. regional engagement in southern Africa.

THE AFRICAN CRISIS RESPONSE INITIATIVE (ACRI)

In an attempt to develop an organic capability to tackle peacekeeping operations on the African continent, the United States has proposed a ready response force composed of troops from African militaries. Using the title "African Crisis Response Initiative," after an U.S. interagency working group objected to the word 'force' in the title, the ACRI has been formed with the United States, France, the United Kingdom and,

most importantly, seven African nations as members. The British and French agree in principle to a joint approach to train African armed forces for peacekeeping operations. These forces are envisioned as units designed to be available to the United Nations as a standby force list¹⁰ for peacekeeping operations in Africa under United Nations auspices.

The ground force is to be sized at eight battalions and a brigade headquarters unit. The United States, using Special Operations units, will assist in the training plan of the force with an emphasis on commonality of basic military instruction, communications, and skills required for peacekeeping operations in Africa. This uniformity among the battalions is important and is designed to enable African forces to operate as seamlessly as possible among themselves and with military forces from Europe and the United States. To date, troops from Senegal, Mali, and Uganda are undergoing the initial ACRI training and the United States has funded the initiative to about 15 million dollars.¹¹

One important omission from the ACRI initiative is the Republic of South Africa. South Africa has yet to embrace the ACRI process but does support the principle of an organic African peacekeeping force. The RSA clearly envisions an organic force for security in southern Africa, but has yet to grapple with allowing large foreign military forces within South

Africa and sending its own forces abroad to troubled areas in Africa.

MILITARY FORCES AS A NATIONAL INSTRUMENT OF ENGAGEMENT

The National Security Strategy sets as a key tenet of U.S. policy the advancement of national interests through the shaping of the international environment. Some of the many tools at the disposal of the nation include diplomacy, international assistance, arms control, nonproliferation initiatives and military activities. While each of these instruments plays an important part in the U.S. strategy of regional engagement, military forces are an effective, proven, and perhaps the most immediate tool of the nation for overseas presence and non-hostile engagement. Routine deployments of military units provide a unique opportunity for the United States to engage nations without conflict and to provide a template for developing nations in the use of military forces for something other than combat. The Strategy further states that forward-based and forward-deployed forces contribute toward improving regional security and stability. Military forces contribute to defense cooperation, security assistance training, exercises with friends and allies, promoting regional stability, deterring aggression and coercion, prevent and reduce conflicts and threats, and to serve as role models for militaries in emerging democracies. This is a blueprint for the needs of sub-Saharan Africa.

U.S. FORCES IN OVERSEAS PRESENCE AND ENGAGEMENT

Few areas on the globe are riper for involvement by the United States to help shape its future security environment than sub-Saharan Africa. Credible overseas presence and engagement by American military forces there demonstrates our commitment to our African allies and friends, underwrites regional stability, gains U.S. familiarity with overseas operating environments, promotes combined training among forces of friendly countries and provides initial response capabilities.

The United States European Command with its headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany has the responsibility to promote regional stability and to advance U.S. security interests in southern Africa through the employment of military forces. In its 1996 vision document, USEUCOM Strategy of Engagement and Preparedness, the European Command states three specific objectives for U.S. military engagement in Africa. These include:

- 1) Promote stability , democratization, and military professionalism in Africa.
- 2) Provide prompt response to humanitarian crisis.
- 3) Provide reception, staging, onward movement, and integration of forces.¹²

These objectives of the European Command for Africa show the need for American forces to work closely with militaries of

the region. The motivation for proactive engagement is to enable the U.S. to build a professional military relationship with African armed forces, and to, "help them build the institutions and organizations that guarantee democratic civilian control and to create a public perception of the guarantor of public safety."¹³ The USEUCOM strategy further encourages initiatives in the region that would support regional approaches and help solve security problems in sub-Saharan Africa.

Prompt response to a potential humanitarian crisis in sub-Saharan Africa is a likely scenario well into the next century. Any response into potentially troubled areas in sub-Saharan Africa would require reception, staging and onward movement for military forces and non-governmental organizations from a stable and secure area close to the crisis. The countries and military assets of southern Africa could provide a logical "stepping off point" for international forces and relief agencies to stage for direct intervention northward.

Because U.S. forces assigned to Europe have been steadily declining since the end of the Cold War, it was necessary for the European Command to develop a prioritized plan for theater-wide engagement of its assigned American military forces. This plan is designed to focus scarce U.S. military resources in the European Theater precisely to those areas that USEUCOM considers

essential for regional security. USEUCOM's Theater Security Planning System, or TSPS, is the heart of this planning system. It divides the diverse European Theater into regions in order to develop policy, prepare guidance, and allocate resources with a degree of regional commonality.¹⁴ Sub-Saharan Africa is one of the four regions in the TSPS. The TSPS focuses upon each country in southern Africa in an independent manner and, in the TSPS lexicon, as a "Country Campaign Plan." Each country plan is fitted together into a "sub-Saharan Africa Regional Campaign Plan." Because of past prohibition on interaction with militaries of repressive regimes in sub-Saharan Africa, the danger here will be a tendency to marginalize this area in relation to the other three regions in the theater.

The large potential for future problems in and around sub-Saharan Africa demand that a permanent plan of action here be built around seeds, such as the BNC and ACRI, that are already in place. Unfortunately, southern African nations, and in particular South Africa, do not appear to fully embrace ACRI¹⁵ and seem reluctant to harbor large U.S. military elements on their territory. To fully engage the region with U.S. forces may, therefore, be difficult and alternatives to large deployments of ground troops must be incorporated into the foundation of any USEUCOM theater engagement plan. Naval and Special Operations forces, being less obtrusive and more fluid,

may offer the European Command excellent options to remain engaged without a large permanent military footprint.

PEACETIME FORWARD PRESENCE OPERATIONS BY U.S. NAVAL FORCES

Naval forces are an indispensable and unique component of the European Command's forward engagement goals for the theater. These forces conduct routine port visits to nations and regions, sustain larger demonstrations of support to vital areas with long-standing regional security interests, and demonstrate periodic shows of support to remote areas of the theater. The West African Training Cruise (WATC) is an example of a periodic deployment by naval forces in support of the advancement of USEUCOM engagement initiatives in the remote southern African region.

According to Forward from the Sea... The Navy Operational Concept published in March 1997, naval forces play a unique role in projecting national forward presence. The Navy's role in peacetime engagement is "to project American influence and power abroad in support of U.S. efforts to shape the security environment in ways that promote regional economic and political stability."¹⁶ Naval presence includes a wide range of forward-deployed Navy and Marine Corps units both afloat and ashore in areas throughout the world. In peacetime, naval forces build interoperability with friendly and allied forces so the full

range of U.S. military forces can participate fully as a part of a multinational response or as part of an 'ad hoc' coalition forged to respond to short-notice crisis situations.¹⁷ Additionally, forward-deployed naval forces routinely contribute to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts.

The basic presence building blocks of naval forces are the Aircraft Carrier Battlegroup (CVBG) and the Amphibious Ready Group (ARG). In addition to the aircraft carrier, the CVBG includes four to six versatile surface combatants, an embarked carrier air wing, and a Naval Special Warfare Task Unit (NSWTU). The ARG, with nearly two thousand Marines embarked as a special operations capable Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), contains aircraft and landing craft with which to quickly employ the MEU in a crisis. Other naval units that make good overseas presence representatives include Naval Construction Battalions, or SEABEES, field hospitals, and hospital ships.

Naval and Special Operations forces make excellent options for enhancing the full spectrum of regional military engagement by the United States with partner nations. Only these forces can operate through the full range of a host nation's military skills. Naval units can participate with navy and coastal guard units at sea, while aircraft can interact with the national air forces of the potential partner nation. Special Operations, Marine, and SEABEE units can exercise with local ground units

and can train and work with host nation Special Operations or commando forces.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL DEFENCE FORCES (SANDF)

A full partner in any bilateral operation with South Africa will be the South African National Defence Force. The ending of apartheid and the establishment of democracy have led to several dramatic changes in South Africa. The country, as well as the SANDF, has been welcomed back into the international community and many new links with other regional military forces have been forged. South Africa now faces a reduced conventional military threat and many of its past enemies throughout the region are now its allies. The South African Constitution and the Defence White Paper define the primary function for the SANDF as, "to defend and protect the Republic, its territorial integrity and its people in accordance with the Constitution and international law regulating the use of force."¹⁸ The overarching reason for the existence of the SANDF, as in most other nations with a military, is to prevent conflict and war. Deterrence, however, requires a strong, professional, and prepared defense force whose capability is sufficient to discourage potential aggressors.

The South African Constitution also provides that the SANDF can be employed in capacities other than national defense.

South African forces can be constitutionally used for "service in compliance with international agreements between the Republic and other international bodies and states."¹⁹ The Constitution further describes other uses of the defense force as, "...relief of distress, rescue operations and the maintenance of essential services as well as assistance to the South African Police Service (SAPS) in the upholding of law and order in the Republic."²⁰ It is under this proviso that bilateral presence operations between the United States military and South African National Defence Forces will mostly likely find a common bond.

A FRAMEWORK FOR MILITARY ENGAGEMENT

A United States military engagement plan for South Africa must be a coordinated and interlocking piece of a larger regional engagement plan developed by USEUCOM's TSPS. But unlike other regional plans, it must include both USEUCOM and USACOM apportioned forces. To be successful, the plan should be designed by military planners of both U.S. geographic CINC's and each nation. This would then incorporate all current sub-Saharan engagement programs by U.S. forces. After preliminary approval by the U.S. European Command, Atlantic Command, and the SANDF Headquarters, the Defense Committee of the Binational Commission is the suggested final approval authority for the plan. This would give it not only legitimacy by the civilian hierarchies of both governments, but also provide to the upper levels of each government a clear cut set of military options that precisely fit the needs of the region and spirit of the Binational Commission's agenda.

To succeed, any credible engagement regime should be phased gradually to garner the maximum benefits of mutual training, tailored to serve as a basis for operations throughout the littoral of Africa, and fit the national strategic objectives of each nation. An U.S. Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC) for South Africa could be established to oversee the administration of major aspects of the plan. The ODC, on site at the SANDF

other military headquarters in Pretoria, would likely be headed by a senior U.S. military officer and oversee each aspect of the approved framework inside South Africa.

The composition of a sound U.S./RSA engagement plan would include five basic elements. These elements are education, training, equipment, visits, and exercises. Each of them plays an important role in bringing the two military organizations closer together.

EDUCATION

The bedrock of any mutual engagement plan is sound education in military science and current operational procedures and doctrine. The International Military Education and Training (IMET) program, where U.S. officers attend host nation military schools and foreign officers attend schools in the United States, makes sense for this plan. South African military officers should be invited to attend United States service academies such as the United States Military Academy at West Point or the Naval War College at Newport. Service schools such as fire-fighting, flight training, basic underwater demolition and the significant law enforcement courses at the Military Police School could be included as part of this element of officer exchanges. Non-military schools in anti-terrorism, mapping, logistics, and civil-military relations could be

included by other U.S. government agencies to help round out an advanced training syllabus for officers and enlisted personnel alike. U.S. military officers attending similar senior service colleges and schools in the Republic of South Africa could complement the cycle of bilateral education.

TRAINING

Mutual training between the two nations is an important condition for meaningful regional engagement. Basic, intermediate, and advanced force training packages should be developed for both nations. Training should be tailored to the needs of each country and with the goal of improving future interaction between the two militaries for operations in the southern African region. Of particular interest to the United States would be *in situ* training areas that could be provided by the Republic of South Africa. Examples include participation alongside the South African Navy in Naval Surface Fire Support and in air combat training with the South African Air Force. This training, in the African environment, would be a valuable experience for the personnel of both military forces. Also, use of an instrumented and developed aircraft bombing range for air interdiction and close air support training of combat aircraft would benefit the skills of pilots of both nations.

EQUIPMENT

Critical, inter-operable equipment is often the key to success in the harsh diverse environment of the African continent. The South African military armaments industry has produced excellent high tech weaponry that can be of great value to any potential coalition. U.S. forces need to know how to operate with SANDF units equipped with this state-of-the-art military equipment which includes Warrior Class surface combatants, advanced surface-to-air missile systems and high speed area communications suites.²¹

Getting supplies and equipment quickly to the troubled area can often mean the difference between success and failure of a mission. In the future, prepositioned humanitarian relief equipment could be staged within South Africa to be rapidly shipped to potential areas of need throughout sub-Saharan Africa.

The Marine Corps could benefit from an area in Africa to train with South African special operations forces and the equipment they bring. An area for amphibious operations and an offload site for the link-up of Maritime Prepositioned Equipment and a Marine fly away team would aid South Africans in familiarity with U.S. doctrine and equipment likely to be used in any mutual combat or humanitarian operation. Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) training areas and a site for the offload and

washing of ARG equipment prior to return to the United States after a Middle East deployment, would be of great benefit to transiting U.S. Marine forces.

Foreign military sales, which for years were off-limits to the apartheid RSA, could be made available to the SANDF. In particular, communications equipment that would enable rapid interaction between the two forces, should be explored as a top priority for the plan. Other equipment sales that would directly benefit the interoperability of the two militaries should be offered for potential sale to the SANDF.

VISITS

Visits by naval units are the least intrusive element of any military engagement plan. To be of value, they must be regular, routine, and coordinated well in advance to gain the most benefit of every aspect of the visit. To date, the West African Training Cruise (WATC) is the most frequent naval visit program in sub-Saharan Africa. A USACOM initiative, WATC normally consists of one or two amphibious surface ships. This program could be easily expanded to incorporate other U.S. ship types to meet the training or exercise requirements of both nations.

The centerpiece of any U.S. naval visit is the Aircraft Carrier Battlegroup. As CVBGs transit to take station in the

Arabian Gulf, a periodic use of the Cape sea route would greatly benefit the U.S./RSA engagement plan and the contribution that a carrier provides to any exercise program would greatly enhance the skill of both navies. Amphibious Ready Groups which routinely sail to the Arabian Gulf from east coast U.S. ports could also transit via the Cape to provide the South African Navy a training and exercise opportunity. Periodic port visits by U.S. surface ships and nuclear submarines, as well as, visits to the United States by South African naval units would greatly contribute to the mutual education of both navies.

Visits by Flag and General Officers to headquarters units of both nations would help to cement the program and aid in the exchange of ideas for the future direction of both militaries. These visits, which add significantly to the interoperability of both nations, are already an important part of the USEUCOM TSPS process.

EXERCISES

A mutual military exercise program enables planners of both nations to gauge the progress of the education, training and visit programs of the plan. Routine Command Post Exercises, or CPXs, give the senior leadership of both nations the opportunity to practice tactics, techniques and procedures to be used in the command of forces from both nations. A program that runs the

full gamut of military skills from maneuvering, signaling, search and rescue, to more complex operations such as amphibious warfare and coordinated close air support is critical in building experience for future coalitions.

Humanitarian and disaster relief, field hospital employment and medical training *in situ* by both nations, provides a unique opportunity for the participants to share experience in operations that both nations are most likely to perform during the next decade. Rapid airfield development by engineer units or naval construction battalions would be a logical addition to this portion of the exercise program.

Adding the SAN to the highly successful U.S. Navy-to-Navy Staff Talk Program would foster an excellent consultation venue for both navies. The opportunity to coordinate present and future naval developments by both nations through dialogue is important. Alternating talks in both Washington and Pretoria affords the opportunity for officers of both navies to gain familiarity of each other's headquarters.

ENGAGEMENT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA IS A GOOD INITIAL OPTION

We need to engage southern Africa before it is too late. The strategic aims of U.S. policy, despite some tactical changes, are nearly the same at mid-decade as they were in the 1980s. The longer policy makers in the United States wait before developing a cohesive African strategy, the more the opportunity for unilateral intervention by U.S. military forces grows. In this era of declining military budgets, inaction on the part of the United States costs too much and fails to take advantage of significant military capabilities which already exist in southern Africa.

South Africa is the logical partner with which to begin regional engagement in sub-Saharan Africa. Previous U.S. administrations sought to curtail conflicts in southern Africa and accelerate the abolition of apartheid by castigating and isolating South Africa. While the end of apartheid did bring about a change in political relations between the two nations, it did not bring about any significant military exchanges between the two powers. This must change. Only South Africa offers the infrastructure and mature military establishment to enable it to participate today in meaningful coalition activities in sub-Saharan Africa. U.S. military planners must take advantage of this potential regional ally and build a

relationship now which allows the two nations together to tackle some of southern Africa's problems.

The RSA/US Binational Commission provides an excellent framework for the United States to build a relationship for military engagement. The Commission's Defense Committee, established last July, will enable the two nations to share in a wide range of military activities. This committee could be influenced by actions on the part of U.S. planners at both USEUCOM and USACOM to build a closer military-to-military relationship for potential defense and humanitarian operations between the U.S. and the SANDF. A tailored regional engagement plan for military forces, according to USEUCOM's TSPS guidelines, approved by the Commission, would go a long way toward building a lasting mutual relationship to tackle potential defense, as well as humanitarian problems in southern Africa. Expanding ACRI to include the Republic of South Africa, would be an excellent first goal for the Defense Committee.

Military forces in general, are an effective proven option for regional engagement. Naval and Special Operations forces in particular, provide the initial framework to build a good and cost-effective military engagement plan for America and South Africa. A plan that incorporates training, exercises, visits, education, and equipment is a proven formula for success for bilateral operations.

It is in the self-interest of the United States to minimize conflict in southern Africa, promote democracy, encourage conditions that are favorable to improving the standard of living, and foster a sense of civilian control of the military. Military cooperation can act as a catalyst for each of these interests and lead to long term solutions to the problems of this dynamic continent.

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ENDNOTES

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